

The Effect of Total Physical Response (TPR) Method and Word List for Teaching Vocabulary to Children

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Abstract. The writer conducted a study about teaching vocabulary by using the Total Physical Response method and Word List. The objective of this study is to find out whether the students taught with Total Physical Response method have obtained higher vocabulary achievement than taught with word list.

The result showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the third grade students taught with Total Physical Response method got higher vocabulary achievement than those taught with Word List. In short, it can be said that teaching vocabulary using Total Physical Response method is more successful than using word list.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Total Physical Response Method, Word List

Introduction

Nowadays vocabulary becomes an important thing in learning English as a foreign language. We should realize that most textbooks which contain modern technology and knowledge are written in English. Besides, vocabulary is important to make up words in order to make communication work out. Bowen and Marks (1994: 90) as quoted by Yoelianny (1992:2) state that vocabulary occupies the centre stage knowing that English is widely used to communicate with people in any field all over the world nowadays. Without knowing vocabulary, how can we speak well? How can we like reading without having the ability to determine the meaning of the words? The best answer of these problems is by learning the vocabulary as early as possible.

Therefore, teachers should introduce vocabulary to young learners as soon as possible. Teaching vocabulary to young learners is not easy because they usually get bored easily. Because of that the teacher should have a good method to teach the vocabularies. Almost all the teachers still use the traditional method, such as word list in teaching the vocabulary. They usually ask the students to memorize the meaning of a list of English word or translate the words from English to Indonesian. This kind of teaching technique can make the students get bored. To overcome the problem above, teachers should vary the methods in teaching. Actually there are many methods that can be used to teach vocabulary. One of the methods is the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. According to Asher (1988), the Total Physical Response method has also been proved to be successful in teaching English in many countries in which the native languages are not English. How is the

application of the TPR method in Indonesia? Based on the writer's observation, the TPR method has rarely been used by the English teachers here. Almost all the teachers still used word list. They think that word list is the best way to teach vocabulary. Therefore, in this study the writer wants to find out whether the Total Physical Response method is really more effective in motivating the students to learn the vocabulary so that at last the students can have better vocabulary achievement.

In line with the background of the study, the problem is stated as follows: "Is there any significant difference between using Total Physical Response method and word list for teaching vocabulary to the third grade students of elementary school?"

Research Methodology

This study is a quasi-experimental study. The writer applies non-equivalent-groups post test only design. It means that the writer conducted her study in intact classes. The reason for choosing this design is that it is impossible to assign randomly subjects to groups. Therefore, the writer used three existing classes. From the three classes, one of them was considered as an experimental group that was taught the new vocabulary with Total Physical Response method, the second class was considered as a control group that was taught by using Word List and the last class was considered as the pilot group, which the writer used it to measure the validity and the reliability of the test items.

The Treatments

The writer taught the new vocabulary for the experimental group by using Total Physical Response method and for the control group; Word List was used. Both of the classes were given the same topic or the same new vocabularies.

Experimental group. Students belonging to the experimental group obtained the Total Physical Response method. First, the teacher carried out the pre-instructional activities. She greeted the students and asked some triggering questions about the topic given.

On the whilst-instructional activities, the students were introduced the things that are used for the lesson, such as: some pictures related to the topic, book, etc. Then the students were asked to listen the teacher, while the teacher spoke out the vocabulary taught and acted it out. After that, the teacher asked the students to imitate the teacher's action. Next, the teacher asked the students to do the actions by themselves based on the teacher's command. In this step, the teacher spoke out the action verb and the students did the action. Then, the teacher asked some of the students to be the volunteers. The volunteers were asked to do the action based on the teacher's command. After that, the teacher asked the volunteers to assume the role of the teacher in giving the command to her or his classmates. The volunteers asked some of her or his classmates to

do the action. Next, the teacher gave some action sequence for the students. For example, the teacher asked the students to sweep the floor, wash the dishes and makes the bed. The students did the action in a sequence. Then, the teacher asked some volunteers to do the sequence action.

At the end of the lesson, and as the post-instructional activity, the students were given an exercise which had to be done individually. The exercise was related to the lesson (action verb).

Control group. Students of the control group went through the word list. First, just like in the pre-instructional activities in experimental group, the teacher greeted the students and asked some triggering questions about the topic given.

The whilst-instructional activities in the control group were started by distributing the worksheet for the students. The worksheet was about a reading passage related to the topic. Then, the teacher asked the students to read the reading passage in silence. After a few minutes, the teacher read the reading passage loudly and asked the students to repeat after the teacher. The teacher read one sentence at a time. Next, the teacher listed the verbs that are related to the reading passage on the white board and read the verbs loudly. Then, the teacher translated the verbs into Indonesian. After that the teacher asked the students to pronounce the verbs on the white board.

The post-instructional activity in the control group was the same as in the experimental group. Students were given an exercise which had to be done individually. The exercise was related to the lesson (action verb).

The Treatment of the Experimental and the Control Groups

Experimental Group	Control Group
1. Introduced the things that are used for the lesson.	1. Distributed the students' worksheet.
2. Asked the students to listen to the teacher's instructions	2. Asked the students to read the reading passage.
3. Asked the students to imitate the teacher's action (one action at a time).	3. Read the reading passage loudly and ask the students to repeat after the teacher (one sentence at a time).
4. Asked the students to repeat the action several times.	4. Listed the verbs that are related to the reading passage on the white board.
5. Asked some students to be volunteers to come forward and give some instructions.	5. Translated the verbs into Indonesian.
6. Asked the students to do the sequence actions.	6. Asked the students to pronounce the words.
7. Asked some volunteers to do the sequence actions.	7. Asked the students to translate the reading

8. Asked the students to do the exercise (matched the words in the box A with the picture in the box B).	8. Asked the students to do the exercise (matched the words in the box A with the picture in the box B). passage into Indonesian.
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Data Analysis Technique

Since the writer compares the post test score of the experimental and the control group, the t-test formula for independent samples was used to answer the major problem namely “Is there any significant difference between using Total Physical Response method and word list for teaching vocabulary to the third grade students of elementary school?”. The formula was used to find out whether there was a significant difference or not between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group.

In analyzing the mean scores of the experimental and the control group, the writer formulates the null hypothesis (H_0) which says “There is no significant difference on the vocabulary achievement of students taught using Total Physical Response Method and those taught using Word List.” This null hypothesis is then formulated in its alternative hypothesis (H_a) which says “There is a significant difference on the vocabulary achievement of students who are taught using Total Physical Response method and those who are taught using Word List.”

Findings And Discussions

The Findings of an Analysis of Two Means Tests of Experimental and Control Group

In this section, the writer would like to present the findings of the research to prove whether the use of Total Physical Response method can really improve the student’s vocabulary achievement or not. Thus, the writer made an analysis based on the data which had been collected. In analyzing the data, the writer used a certain procedure that had already been discussed in the previous chapter.

To answer the major problem namely “Is there any significant difference between using Total Physical Response method and word list for teaching vocabulary to the third grade students of elementary school?” the writer analyzed the data she got by using t-test formula for independent sample at the 5% level of significance and 38 degrees of freedom (df). Then, the writer compared the means of the post test scores of the experimental group and the means of the control group. The findings of the calculation are as follows:

The Calculation of the Mean Scores of Posttest

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t_{table}	to	Sig./ not sig.
3-A (Experimental Group)	61.67	11.76	1.6860	1.85	Sig.
3-C (Control Group)	52.27	8.27			

Based on the calculation above, the writer found out that the mean score of the experimental group (3-A) was 61.67 and the means score of the control group (3-C) was 52.27. With the level of significance at 5%, the writer found out that the observed t (to) was 1.85. Since to is greater than the table, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. It meant that there was a significant difference between the vocabulary achievement of students who are taught using Total Physical Response method and those who using Word List. Therefore, it is concluded that the experimental group (3A) which was taught using Total Physical Response method had higher vocabulary achievement than those taught with Word List.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of this study shows that there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group. The vocabulary achievement of the students who were taught using Total Physical Response method is higher than the ones who were taught using word list. From the result, it is obvious that Total Physical response method in teaching of vocabulary can help the students to receive and understand the new material (vocabularies) more easily and clearly.

There were three times of treatments with the students in each class. The writer observed that the students in the experimental group were more excited in learning the new material (vocabularies). In this class, the writer showed the actions and all the students imitated the writer's actions. They were very happy and enjoyed the situation. Most of them actively participated in front of the classroom to do the writer's command.

In the control group, the writer observed that the students faced difficulty and got bored with the lesson. Some of the students paid attention to the lesson given and tried to memorize all the vocabularies by translating the words into Indonesian. But, the others were not active. They were silent and only took some notes in their notebooks. However, most of the students were not too enthusiastic in answering the questions nor actively participated in the classroom. To overcome the students' boredom, the writer asked them to play a game.

After three times of meetings (treatments), the writer conducted a post test. The result the post test showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups. In short, it can be said that teaching vocabulary using Total Physical Response method is more successful than using word list.

Conclusion And Suggestion

Conclusion

Nowadays vocabulary becomes an important thing in learning English as a foreign language. We should realize that most textbooks which contain modern technology and knowledge are written in English. Besides, vocabulary is important to make up words in order to make communication work out. Therefore teachers should introduce vocabulary to young learners as soon as possible. Teaching vocabulary to young learners is not easy because young learners usually get bored easily.

The method of Total Physical Response (TPR) can be used in teaching vocabulary. This method was introduced by James J. Asher (1988) as a solution to the difficulties in acquiring a second language. Asher tested this method to his students. The results were that the TPR method proved to work well with nearly all children whose native language was not English. The TPR method demands the teacher and students to act out the vocabulary. The most suitable vocabulary to be taught using this method is the action words. It is a stress-free method because it brings a lot of fun into the classroom and the students are not asked to speak until they are ready. It is in line with one of the children's nature because it makes the students active.

Many teachers mostly use a word list in teaching vocabulary. Word list is the most popular method used by teachers. There are some reasons why teachers like to use a word list. First, A word list is helpful because it can help the students easily understand the meaning of the words. Besides, word list is also easy to prepare because it does not need any media. Many teachers find difficulties in preparing the media to support the teaching learning process. So, in short, it can be said that word list is very practical so that most teachers like it. However, using this method too much is not recommended because it can make the students get bored easily.

Therefore, in this study the writer wants to find out whether the Total Physical Response method is really more effective in motivating the students to learn the vocabulary so that at last the students can have better vocabulary achievement.

The population of this study is all of the third grade students of SD YPPI I Surabaya, belonging to the school year of 2007-2008. The sample of this study is taken from three classes. Class III-A was randomly decided to be the experimental group, III-C was the control group, and class III-B was the pilot group. There were three times of meetings (treatments) with the students in each class and after the treatments, the writer conducted a post test.

The result of this study shows that there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group. The vocabulary achievement of the students who were taught by using Total Physical Response method is higher than the ones who were taught by using word list.

Suggestions

Based on the results of this study, the writer would like to give some suggestions on which the writer wishes will be an advantageous contribution for the English teachers and for further studies.

Suggestions for English Teachers

There are some suggestions that the writer would like to give to the English teachers, especially those who teach vocabulary by using Total Physical Response method to elementary school students.

1. The teacher should be able to choose the materials carefully when conducting the Total Physical Response method. As the students are young learners, the teacher should keep in mind that they still love to play and need to be active. So, the teacher should choose a material that is familiar to them, interesting and easily understood.
2. The teacher should be able to control the class when conducting the Total Physical Response method; otherwise, there would be chaos in class because the students would be very noisy. Thus, the teacher should not lose control on the students.
3. The teacher should be able to encourage the students if they feel ashamed to imitate the action. It is better if the teacher repeats the action and makes the students more relax to imitate the action.
4. To check the student's understanding of the materials, the teacher may give vocabulary exercises to the students in the written form or the teacher asks the students to perform the action individually in front of the classroom.

Recommendations for Further Research

The writer realizes that this study is still far from being perfect. However, she hopes that this study can be used as a reference for other researchers or readers who will carry out a more thorough study in improving students' vocabulary achievement through Total Physical Response method. The writer would like to suggest other researchers to do a further study on this topic as follows in order to get more complete and valid results:

1. Choose a school whose students are from the lower society group. The students of higher society group may join English course outside the school, so they may have known the meanings of words before they are taught at school.
2. The writer recommends that the treatment should be given more than three meetings so that the students have enough time to adjust their learning.
3. It would be better if other researchers take wider samples, like junior and senior high school.

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